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law in Copenhagen, gave him ready access to the best society in Iceland ; and his picturesque descriptions of Icelandic manners and customs will be read with especial interest. Among the most vivid of these is the account of a dinner at the Government House in Reykjavik, with his own after-dinner speech in Latin. His descriptions of scenery are equally noticeable for their freshness of coloring and sharpness of outline ; and there is no more attractive passage in the volume than the account of his visit to the Geysers. We have also a charming little sketch of an English home in Norway, and several other descriptions of domestic life full of simple beauty, besides several poetical pieces of his own composition, which are not without merit. The best of these last, we think, is the short poem at the close of the volume, addressed "To the Figure-Head of the Foam." The Appendix contains the Thermometrical Observations taken during the voyage. The English edition, which has been considerably read in this country, is illustrated by several well-executed engravings on wood. They are omitted in the American reprint, which, in other respects, is fully equal to the English copy.

9. — *François de Médicis. Roman Historique.* Par ALFRED DES ESSARTS. Paris : Hachette. 1858. 16mo. pp. 343.

THE heroine of this interesting historical novel is the famous Bianca Capello ; but we have to complain that M. des Essarts has perverted the facts of her story in his endeavor to make her a paragon of beauty and virtue. Her true story is not written in this romance. Sismondi and Artaud de Montor relate it in quite another way. According to them, Bianca was as ambitious, cunning, and unscrupulous as she was beautiful. She was the mistress of Francis of Florence long before she became his wife, and even during the lifetime of his duchess. Though her husband connived at her intrigue, it was found both for her and her princely lover much more convenient to have him out of the way ; and his assassination was accomplished by other means than those which M. des Essarts invents. The attempt to foist upon the Grand Duke a supposititious child, which, more than anything else, has given notoriety to Bianca's name, is wholly passed over in this novel. Indeed, the novel is historical only so far as a few facts are made the basis of invented motives and imaginary characters. Historically, this novel of "François de Médicis" is even a more gross distortion of fact than the "Beatrice Cenci" of Guerrazzi. But as a work of art, it is incomparably superior to that disgusting production. The pictures of

life in Florence in the sixteenth century are finely drawn and colored, and we feel as we read all the charm of that fascinating region and that brilliant society. The courtiers, wits, diplomats, French, Spanish, Venetian, Roman, all pass before us, and glimpses of the church interiors vary the pageant of luxurious palace life. As the scenes lie in Italy, we are of course treated to plots and murders; but there is none of that nauseous detail of villany which overloads the pages of Signor Guerrazzi. Neither the love nor the crime is overdone, as both would have been had the whole truth been told about the fair Venetian runaway.

M. des Essarts's epigrams have not the point of those of Houssaye or Voltaire, yet there are several ingenious specimens in that kind in his novel. Perhaps the best thing in it is the picture of Montaigne at the court of Francis. The character of Francis is ably, and, on the whole, fairly drawn. A shade deeper of tyranny and profligacy would come nearer to the mark.

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10. — *Le Cardinal de Bérulle. Sa Vie, ses Écrits, son Temps.* Par M. NOURRISSON, Professeur de Philosophie à la Faculté des Lettres de Clermont. Paris: Didier. 1856. 12mo. pp. 263.

THE Cardinal de Bérulle was in many respects a remarkable man, and many dignitaries of the Church, whose services to the ecclesiastical order and to theology have been far inferior to his, have been honored by elaborate biographies. We cannot regard M. Nourrisson's attempt to rescue his hero from undeserved neglect as very successful. He has not the skill or the learning to make out a good case for the Cardinal, and his parallel between Bérulle and Richelieu is as feeble as it is preposterous. As a statesman, Bérulle was unlucky, not to say incapable. His negotiations with Rome, his interposition in the affair of Henrietta of England, and his manœuvres at the French court, were alike failures. We had not expected to see a defence of Bérulle the politician.

But we had looked to find in this volume a full and satisfactory history of the first days of the "Oratoire" in France, of which Bérulle was the founder. This institution, to which the Carmelite foundations in France were only the preface, was really the monument of the famous Clermont scholar. The walls of that old Gothic chapel, which break with their quaint buttresses the even arcades of the new Rue de Rivoli, are a better testimony to the zeal and learning of the reformer of French monasticism than any record of his transactions in the state. Of this hopeful religious achievement, M. Nourrisson's account is sadly inade-